



W.E.B. N.V. breaks ground on a new water plant

The executive staff of the Water-en-Energiebedrijf Aruba, which provides power and water for the island, was joined by members of parliament for the groundbreaking ceremony of a new water plant on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 8. The new facility, using the latest Sea Water Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) technology will be located in close proximity to the where a new power plant was completed on the W.E.B NV grounds in Balashi.

Present on the island for the ground breaking ceremony was Steve Fludder, Vice President of GE-Ionics, providers of the membrane method of water filtration that will be used in the new plant. GE-Ionics is a world leader in water filtration plants, water reuse, wastewater treatment, and process solutions. They have constructed and operate forty such plants in the Caribbean alone, and hundreds worldwide.

A number of individuals involved in this important undertaking came to the podium to address the gathering, beginning with the Director of W.E.B. N.V., Jossy Laclé. This included Mr. Fludder of GE-Ionics and René Prop of CUMAE B.V. of Arnheim, the engineering firm that will manage the project. During his address to the gathering, Mr. Prop of CUMAE made some particularly interesting points of the necessity of developing alternate energy sources, which are being explored and utilized by his company, and is a priority of technological development in many European countries

The Prime Minister of Aruba, Nelson Oduber, was also present at the groundbreaking and addressed the gathering on behalf of the Aruban government. He commended W.E.B. NV and its Director, Jossy Laclé on the successful operation of W.E.B since its privatization nearly fifteen years ago.

The new plant will use a process that should prove more economical in the production of 8000 cubic meters of water per day. Seawater will be processed through literally miles of a fine membrane that was displayed at an expo at the Renaissance convention center later in the day. This will consume far less fuel to process than the method of boiling the seawater that is used by the existing water plants. When this facility is completed and put into operation in September of 2007 the resulting additional water production will actually be 4000 cubic meters per day over present production with the retiring of AquaChem 1, which has been operating since 1983.

The plant construction will cost twenty-six million florins, and is of a "turn-key" nature, with GE-Ionics turning over a completed plant to W.E.B. N.V., and training the company personnel in its use. The financing was arranged through various international financial institutions and the Caribbean Mercantile Bank, with twenty percent of the cost assumed by W.E.B. N.V.

Mr. Laclé declared that this groundbreaking represents "an enormous step forward in education, development, and technology of our operation, maintenance, and personnel. This continuous development is based on the education of all of us at W.E.B. Aruba N.V. to comply with and exceed the expectations of our clients."

The principles involved in the construction of the plant will also include KPMG, Thiel Corporation and the Polytechnisch Ingenieurs Bureau, N.V.. As is the custom on these occasions, the participating companies that will profit from such projects donated to local charities. The beneficiaries of this largess were the Colegio Boekenfonds with a check from CUMAE B.V., and the social organization Guia Mi was a recipient of checks from both Anthony Thiel of Thiel Corporation and Steve Fludder of GE-Ionics.

The festivities ended with a symbolic "groundbreaking" by the Prime Minister and principles involved. They jointly tore away a picture of the old plant to reveal an artist's rendering of the new plant that will take its place in September of 2007. Afterwards, Rolando Rasmijn, Plant Manager conducted tours of the recently completed power plant and explained its operation.

W.E.B. N.V. has coined the slogan "New technology for Aruba" to describe the efforts of management to continually update and maintain the power and water producing facility at an optimum. According to Mr. Laclé, increasing population demands require the continual awareness and adaptability of Aruba's power and water providers to advances in technology that will keep the operation running at top efficiency, and the the willingness to implement these them for the betterment of the community.